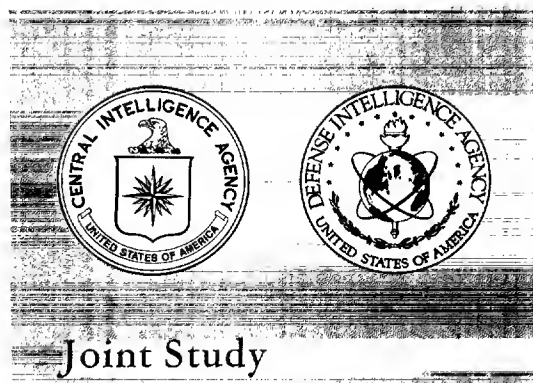


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## Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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21 February 1974

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21 February 1974

**Fifty-First Report****WEEKLY SURVEY OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN INDOCHINA\***

(This report covers the period from  
13 through 20 February)

**The Key Points**

- Troop infiltration continued at a steady rate during the period, as four new regular groups were detected moving south, three to the COSVN area and one to VC MR 5 on the central coast.
- Logistics units in North Vietnam again moved large quantities of ordnance southward, while in Laos vehicle activity decreased substantially.
- Another NVA antiaircraft artillery regiment probably has deployed to Quang Tri Province from North Vietnam. There are also indications that the 19th Regiment, 968th NVA Division may be preparing to leave Laos; if this occurs, the regiment probably would move to the central highlands of South Vietnam.
- Tenuous evidence suggests that major elements of the NVA 5th Infantry Division may be moving from MR 3 to northern MR 4 in South Vietnam.

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\* This report, which replaces the weekly **Communist Violations of the Vietnam and Laos Settlement Agreements and Related Developments**, has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

## Preface

This report is the fifty-first in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

## DETAILS

# I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

## *Personnel Infiltration*

1. Troop infiltration continued at a steady pace during the reporting period, as four new regular groups were initially detected at Binh Tram (BT) 8 near Vinh, North Vietnam. Three of these groups, with an aggregate strength of some 1,700 troops, are traveling to the COSVN area, while the fourth, with an estimated strength of 500 troops, is moving toward VC MR 5 on the central coast. No troops have been detected moving to the B-3 Front since early February. NVA combat units in both MR 5 and the B-3 Front need replacements, and thus far in the dry season both regions have received about one-third the number of infiltrators they received a year ago (see the table below). In addition to troop infiltration, 19 new special-purpose groups comprising about 300 persons were observed in the infiltration system -- 10 en route to the northern half of South Vietnam, 8 traveling to the lower half of the country, and one destined for southern Laos.

**Comparative Starts of Troops  
from North Vietnam, by Destination  
1 September - 20 February**

	1972-73	1973-74
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,500</b>	<b>52,000</b>
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	19,500	2,000
MR 5	9,000	3,000
B-3 Front	14,000	5,500
COSVN	25,000	19,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	11,000	22,500

2. The high rate of northward-moving personnel observed since the beginning of the year [ ] apparently will be increased through at least the end of February. [ ]

[ ] between 800 and 1,000 sick and wounded troops per day will transit the BT 16 area in northern Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam, between 23 and 28 February. If the Communists follow this schedule, at least 4,800 such personnel will move north through BT 16 during the last

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[redacted]

six days of February. This is a weekly rate of about 5,500 and is more than twice the weekly average observed between 1 January and mid-February which, in addition to sick and wounded, included ethnic southerners being sent to North Vietnam for training and personnel on leave. Although it is unlikely that the projected rate will be maintained for any extended period of time, it probably demonstrates Hanoi's continuing emphasis on clearing hospitals in the south, including personnel who are not seriously sick or wounded.

### *Redeployments*

#### *Elements of Another Air Defense Regiment in Quang Tri*

3. Major elements of the 246th NVA Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment apparently have moved from Quang Binh Province in North Vietnam to northern GVN MR 1. [redacted] one battalion of the regiment located near Quang Tri City. The 246th Regiment has been operating in Quang Binh Province and if its movement to South Vietnam is confirmed, the total number of air defense regiments operating in Quang Tri Province will increase to 20 (see the Order of Battle Map).

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#### *Possible Deployment of the NVA's 5th Division to MR 4*

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4. Recent rallier [redacted] indicate that major elements of the NVA 5th Infantry Division are redeploying from northwestern MR 3 to northern MR 4, where the Division previously operated from mid-1972 through early 1973. One battalion of the division's 6th Regiment reportedly infiltrated into Dinh Tuong Province in late January. A battalion political officer from another regiment of the division later said that the entire 6th Regiment had been sent to Dinh Tuong to reinforce NVA elements there. The officer further added that the 6th Regiment would be joined by the division's 275th Regiment. If the deployment of the two regiments occurs, Communist forces in Dinh Tuong Province would increase by roughly 50% to some 5,500 troops.

#### *19th Regiment, 968th NVA Division May Be Preparing to Leave Laos*

5. [redacted] the 19th Infantry Regiment of the 968th NVA Division probably is preparing to relocate from southern Laos. The regiment has assumed a communications posture similar to that which its sister regiment -- the 9th -- established prior to its move last month from Laos to South Vietnam.

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# Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

## South Vietnam

### Regular Combat Forces

		MR 1	
VC/NVA <sup>1</sup>	RVNAF <sup>2</sup>	VC/NVA	RVNAF
186,000	372,000	86,000	103,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		304th	1st
		711th	2nd
		2nd <sup>3</sup>	3rd
		673rd AAA	Regional Forces

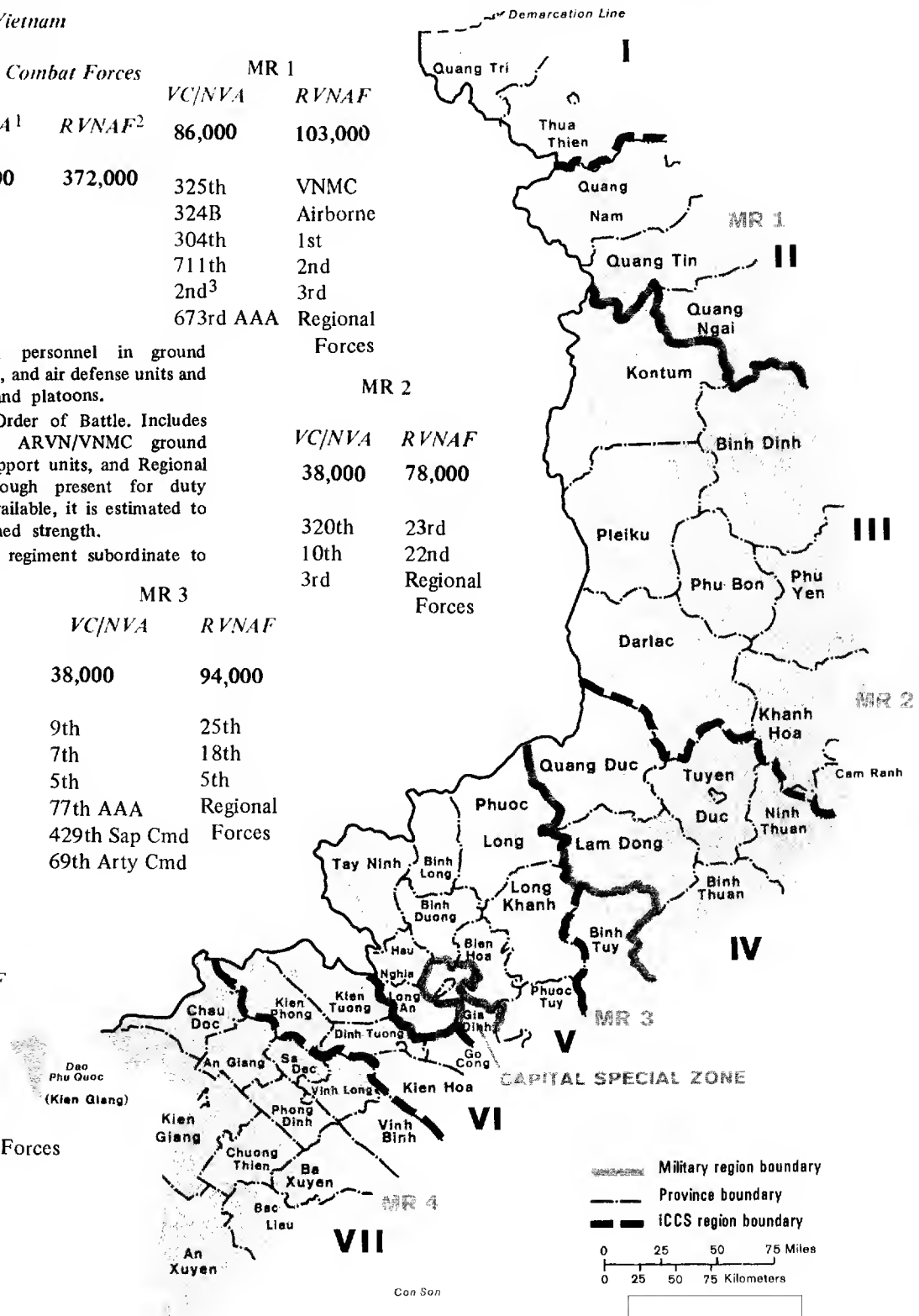
1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

3. Only one infantry regiment subordinate to the division.

MR 3	
VC/NVA	RVNAF
38,000	94,000
9th	25th
7th	18th
5th	5th
77th AAA	Regional Forces
429th Sap Cmd	
69th Arty Cmd	

MR 4	
VC/NVA	RVNAF
24,000	97,000
1st <sup>3</sup>	21st
	9th
	7th
	Regional Forces



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[redacted]

6. If the 19th Regiment relocates, it probably will join the 9th in South Vietnam's central highlands. This would further strengthen NVA defenses along the new logistics corridor - Communist Route 14. This corridor stretches along the western border of South Vietnam through the B-3 Front into the COSVN area. The 968th Headquarters and its remaining subordinate regiment have as yet shown no evidence of an impending move, and both remain in their normal areas of operation in the Laotian Panhandle.

### *Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies*

#### *North Vietnam*

7. Following the general dry season pattern, North Vietnamese logistics units continued to move large quantities of ordnance southward through the Panhandle. [redacted] a storage area near Vinh reported receiving 18 37-mm antiaircraft weapons, while on the following day four barges loaded with more than 260 tons of explosives and other cargo were dispatched. A similar pace was maintained during the rest of the period, and [redacted] at least another 600 tons of weapons and ammunition were handled in this area.

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8. In other activity at Vinh involving non-combat supplies, some 400 tons of building material, destined for the 45th Regiment, were received during the reporting period. The 45th Regiment, whose exact function is unknown, has received several hundred tons of building material and small amounts of ordnance during the past few weeks. Supply shipments directly to a regiment are unusual, and the sending of large quantities of building material to the 45th Regiment indicates that it is probably involved in some type of priority building project.

9. Farther south, in the area between Quang Khe and the DMZ, a similar high level of activity was reflected in COMINT. [redacted] logistics units reported sending four barges carrying about 185 tons of ordnance. [redacted] another three barges were sent from this area, and it was reported that some 440 tons of cargo, about 60% of which was food, remained to be shipped.

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#### *Laos*

10. [redacted]

[redacted] only a moderate level of traffic, substantially below that seen during January when several hundred trucks were observed moving daily along the main supply corridor. On most days, fewer than 75 trucks

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[redacted]

were observed moving south; similar numbers of trucks also were observed moving north during the period, suggesting that the vehicles are returning for more supplies after they have delivered their cargo.

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11. Photography [redacted] also showed the continued use of Route 9 from the Dong Ha area in South Vietnam westward into Laos. Field analysis indicated that this corridor was in good condition and sustaining heavy traffic. The photography also showed that the section of Route 9 in Laos is being improved. This activity, together with the detection of only moderate levels of traffic at the Mu Gia and Ban Karai corridors, suggests that this road and other roads in the western DMZ support the major part of the cargo entering Laos (see the Transportation Map).

#### *South Vietnam*

12. Besides the activity on Route 9, photography also showed 101 trucks parked on Communist Route 14 south of Khe Sanh. Field analysis of the road in the area indicated that the road was open and sustaining heavy activity. [redacted]

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[redacted] plans to ship some 1,650 tons of foodstuffs from Ha Tinh Province in North Vietnam to Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam, during an unspecified period. This shipment, plus additional food deliveries through the port of Dong Ha in recent months -- far in excess of estimated military requirements in this area -- suggests that the civilian population is receiving a substantial amount of these supplies.

### **II. Significant Communist Combat Activity**

13. Combat activity increased in South Vietnam during the past week. Following a period of relatively low activity -- 50 to 75 incidents per day -- a jump to more than 100 incidents was recorded on 16 February. The incident rate has fluctuated between 100 and 150 per day since that time. The increase is due to a dramatic rise in low-level ground contacts and attacks by fire in the Delta. This pattern of increases in Delta fighting has occurred about every 30 days for the past three months.

### **III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina**

14. No other significant developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina were noted during the reporting period.

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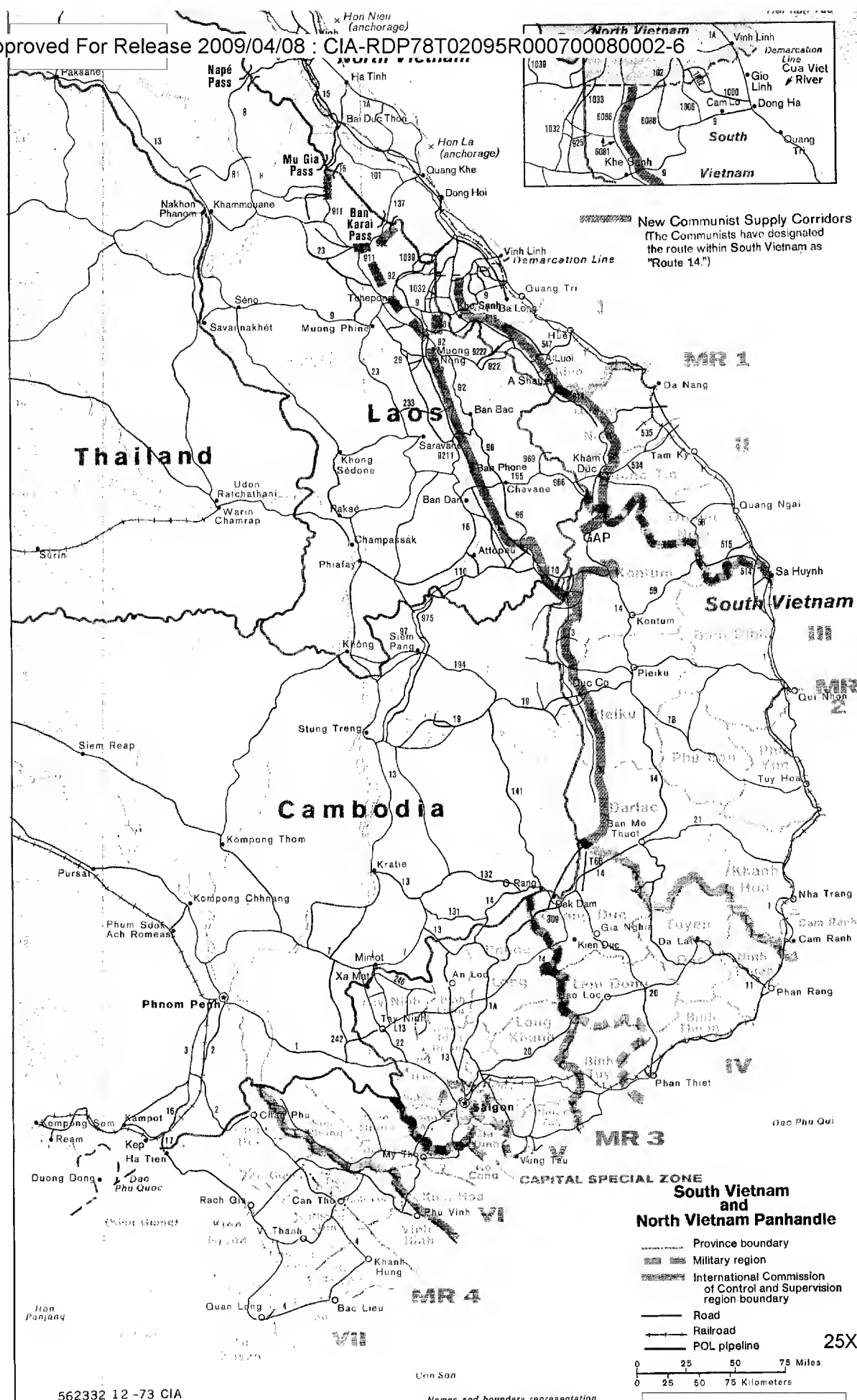
15. A recent analytical report, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] contains the following key points:

Since the signing of the Paris Agreement on 27 January 1973, the North Vietnamese have made sweeping changes in their out-of-country logistic system and now are in a stronger position to support their forces in the southern war zones than at any time during the war.

- Following the cease-fire, Military Region 559 expanded its area of operation to include roughly the western half of MRs 1 and 2 in South Vietnam, and the command reorganized and redeployed its forces to meet the changed territorial responsibilities.
- In Laos and South Vietnam, the Communists have undertaken major road building and upgrading projects involving more than 1,000 miles of roads during the past year.
- Since 27 January 1973 the Communists have moved large quantities of supplies into South Vietnam and adjacent border areas and now have sufficient stocks to sustain heavy fighting in South Vietnam for at least eight months.
- While the Communists are in a powerful position logistically, the conclusion should not follow from this that Hanoi is firmly committed to a major offensive. Current manpower and political indicators do not point to a countrywide offensive during the next few months.



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